

IHC-MM-
14 February 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Analysis and/or Evaluation of the COINS Experiment
for Period 1 October 1969 - 31 March 1970

REFERENCE: Plan for gathering, analyzing and presenting data
on performance and use of COINS, USIB IHC COINS
(Community On-line Intelligence System) Experiment
Test and Analysis Panel, IHC-D-113.4/11, 31 May 1968

Terms of Reference 1. The analysis/evaluation of the COINS Experiment will be performed ~~as set forth~~ *against the COINS objectives, as approved by the DCE.*

Status of T&A

2. ~~B~~ The Test and Analysis (T&A) Panel will make an analysis of COINS performance for the period ending 31 March 1970 in partial fulfillment of the Plan set forth in the above reference. Analysis will be based on data available and on user interviews conducted in each agency. The T&A panel recognizes that some data (e.g., data on exogenic queues) which would be useful for analysis will not be available. User interviews will not be comprehensive with respect to the user population. A minimum of one user interview per agency has been agreed to by the T&A panel members. The volume of user reaction data which will be available cannot be estimated.

Discussion

3. ~~E~~ The data from the System which will be available to the T&A panel for analysis may suffer from a number of inconsistencies and inaccuracies. Some of the factors in COINS which can contribute to these inadequacies in the data are as follows.

a. The systems in the COINS network employ a variety of algorithms for parity checking. This variety causes inconsistency in COINS operations and can skew operational statistics which are used to analyze causes for retransmissions.

b. The clocks in the systems in the network are not synchronized. Time discrepancies between systems could degrade the quality of System performance statistics.

c. Systems in the network evaluate responses to query format errors differently. The CIA system informs the user of the error and classifies the response as an answer. The other system classifies such a response as an abort (fault).

4, ~~3~~ It should be borne in mind that the T&A Panel will not attempt to "evaluate" COINS in the strict sense of that term but rather to analyze System performance and to document user reactions. Since, as indicated above, it cannot be predicted how much user-interview data will be available to the T&A Panel, it is possible that their analysis may need to be supplemented.

Recommendations

5, ~~3~~ In view of the foregoing it is recommended that:

a. IHC not perform any analysis of the operational test data until the T&A Panel report (due end of FY-70), COINS Annual Report, and any report from private contractors ^{are} ~~is~~ received by the IHC;

b. IHC be prepared to supplement user reaction data, through a report due at end of FY-70 by each IHC member on the effects COINS has had on users in his own organization and particularly on the user's work habits; that each IHC member be asked to make positive suggestions as to how the COINS deficiencies and problems can be corrected; and

c. ^{IHC/SS} ~~Mr. Tippet~~ maintain close liaison with the T&A panel ^{to provide input as required.}
[to learn what data is going to be in the T&A report and how it will be presented.]